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INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE 0256
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE 0397
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE 0398
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 2206
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE IMMEDIATE 8782
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB IMMEDIATE 0629

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 000580

SIPDIS

PASS EUR/WE FOR PAMELA SPRATLEN AND KATE SHARP, EUR/RPM FOR
BRUCE TURNER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/20/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [BE](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: BELGIAN SHIP SEIZED BY SOMALI PIRATES AND AID
WORKERS KIDNAPPED IN SOMALIA

Classified By: Political Economic Counselor Richard Eason for reasons 1
.4 B & D.

¶1. (C) Summary: The Belgian ship Pompei was seized by Somali pirates the morning of April 18. The ship is expected to reach the Somali coast on April 22 after a 70 hour voyage. Two aid workers from Doctors without Borders were also kidnapped April 19 in the Bokol region of Somalia. The Belgian Press reports the kidnappers are suspected to be members of the radical Islamic militia group, Al-Shabaab. In a phone call with Charge, Walter Stephens, the diplomatic advisor to the Foreign Minister, asked for U.S. assistance April 19. Charge requested a formal letter describing what kind of assistance after contacting Washington. The GOB is also contacting France for assistance, but not the Netherlands. Stephens indicated the GOB will attempt negotiations initially. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The Belgian ship Pompei was seized by Somali pirates early morning of April 18, approximately 150 miles North of the Seychelles. The ship sounded two alarms and sent one email with the message, "Piracy" indicating it was under attack. There were ten crew members on board: two Belgians, one Dutch (the captain), three Filipinos and four Croatians. The U.S. Navy released three photos and a satellite map of the Pompei and the boat that seized it. There has been no contact with the ship nor its members. The two vessels are expected to reach Somalia on April 22.

¶3. (U) Two aid workers for Doctors Without Borders were kidnapped April 19 in the Bokol region of Somalis. One has Belgian and the other Dutch nationality. Belgian Press reports the kidnappers are suspected to from the radical Islamic militia group Al-Shabaab, which is believed to have links with Al-Qaeda. Doctors without Borders has not released additional information about their employees out of concern for their safety.

¶4. (C) Stephens called Charge Bush on April 19 to make a formal request for U.S. assistance. After discussions with Washington, the Charge advised the Belgians that the request would need to be made in writing. Stephens told Pol/Econ Counselor on the morning of April 20 that the request would be forthcoming shortly and would likely simply be asking initially for a point of contact with the U.S. military.
BUSH

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